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Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/154, provides an overview of the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It contains information concerning the status of signatures and ratifications of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the second through the fifth sessions of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the monitoring of the implementation of the Convention through the Conference of States Parties and ongoing efforts by Governments towards ratification and implementation of the Convention. The report also presents an overview of the progress made by the United Nations system towards implementation of the Convention and describes relevant activities by civil society organizations and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

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I. Introduction

1. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in December 2006 and came into force in May 2008. Since then, the Secretary-General has submitted two reports to the General Assembly that provide information on the status of its ratification and implementation (A/63/264 and A/64/128).

2. In its resolution 64/154, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, at its sixty-sixth session, a report on the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, and on the implementation of the resolution.

3. As of the date of submission of the present report, there were 102 States parties and 149 signatories to the Convention. For the Optional Protocol, there were 62 States parties and 90 signatories. The list of signatures and ratifications or accessions is contained in the annex to the report.

4. Among the 102 States parties to the Convention, 26 are from the African Group, 23 are from the Asian Group, 15 are from the Eastern European Group, 22 are from the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and 15 are from the Western European and other Group (including the European Union).

5. Since the submission of the last report on the status of the Convention to that of the present report, there have been 47 ratifications and 2 accessions, as well as 6 signatures to the Convention. There have also been 17 ratifications, 3 accessions and 5 signatures to the Optional Protocol, including the ratification of the Convention by the European Union, as a regional integration organization.

6. During the past two years, many countries have taken measures to harmonize national laws, enact new legislation and create national focal points to implement the Convention more fully or to move towards its ratification. The Convention has become increasingly recognized as a tool to promote inclusive development and has generated a new impetus to mainstream disability into the international development agenda. The United Nations system promotes disability-inclusive programming at all levels and encourages multi-stakeholder partnerships to strengthen the mainstreaming of disability and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development.

7. Within the United Nations system, there have been increased efforts to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention. A treaty event was held at United Nations Headquarters in September 2010 to continue promotion of the signing and ratification of the Convention. During the event, the Czech Republic the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Portugal and Turkey ratified the Convention.

II. Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

8. In accordance with article 40 of the Convention and with a decision made at the first session of the Conference of States Parties (see CRPD/CSP/2008/4), the second session of the Conference of States Parties was convened at United Nations Headquarters from 2 to 4 September 2009. The theme of that session was "Legislative measures to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities" (see CRPD/CSP/2009/SR.2) and included two round-table discussions, "Accessibility and reasonable accommodation" and "Equal recognition before the law, access to justice and support and decision-making". During the session, an interactive dialogue on United Nations system support for the implementation of the Convention was held, which was followed by an informal meeting on emerging issues co-chaired by the Bureau and civil society, entitled "The global economic crisis, poverty and the implementation of the Convention".

9. The third session of the Conference of States Parties was convened at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 3 September 2010 on the theme "Inclusion of persons with disabilities through implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (see CRPD/CSP/2010/3). During the session, elections were held to appoint 12 members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Two round tables, entitled "Inclusion and living in the community" and "Inclusion and the right to education", were also held during the session, followed by an "Interactive dialogue on the implementation of the Convention by the United Nations system". An informal meeting, entitled "Emerging issues: persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies", was co-chaired by the Bureau and civil society.

10. At the time of the submission of the present report, preparations were under way for the fourth session of the Conference of States Parties, to be held at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 9 September 2011 under the theme, "Enabling development, realizing the Convention through participation, employment and international cooperation".

III. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

11. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[1] began to review reports of States parties at its fourth session, in October 2010, and at its fifth session, in April 2011. The Committee examined the initial report of Tunisia during a public meeting, through an interactive dialogue with a delegation from Tunisia, and adopted its very first concluding observations (CRPD/C/TUN/CO/1). The Committee also carried out a preliminary review of the initial report of Spain and adopted a list of issues in preparation for the consideration of the report (CRPD/C/ESP/Q/1) at its sixth session in September 2011.

12. The Committee held days of general discussion on article 12 (Equal recognition before the law) of the Convention in 2009 and on article 9 (Accessibility) of the Convention in 2010 to support the formulation by the Committee of general comments on these issues. The days of general discussion were attended by representatives of States parties, civil society and others.

13. Among its major decisions, the Committee requested that measures be taken to ensure that all persons with disabilities have full access to meetings of human rights bodies. The Committee also requested that all aspects of accessibility should be taken into account, including training, the provision of documents in Braille and easy-to-read and comprehensible formats, the provision of sign-language

[1] More information on the Committee and its work is available on its website at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx.

interpretation and other appropriate forms of support, as well as relevant information and communications technologies and systems.

14. The Committee issued statements on the natural disasters in Chile, China, Haiti and Pakistan, calling for measures to ensure both the protection and safety of persons with disabilities and their inclusion in decision-making processes.

IV. Activities undertaken in support of the Convention

A. Governments

15. The present section provides a summary of the 41 submissions received from Governments in response to the note verbale of 15 March 2011, in which the Secretariat requested information on progress concerning the Convention and the Optional Protocol. Submissions were received from the following countries: Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Guyana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lithuania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, Oman, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

1. Progress towards ratification of the Convention

16. Several States that had signed the Convention reported having taken steps towards ratification, including Congo, Guyana, Indonesia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Netherlands and Poland.

17. The following Governments reported on progress made in their legislative framework towards ratification of the Convention:

(a) Cameroon adopted its Law No. 2010/002 of 13 April 2010, which promotes the social, economic and political integration of persons with disabilities. The Law includes implementation and enforcement measures;

(b) Congo is in the process of ratifying the Convention after it was authenticated by the approval of the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities;

(c) Guyana passed the 2010 Persons with Disability Act and is focusing on the implementation of the Act prior to its ratification of the Convention;

(d) Indonesia has included ratification of the Convention within the National Plan for Human Rights for 2011-2014 and will be discussing the ratification process at the parliamentary level later this year;

(e) Japan drafted a bill to revise its Basic Law for Disabled Persons to support the social participation and livelihood of persons with disabilities. The Bill was submitted to the Diet in April 2011;

(f) The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as part of its national strategy to improve the rights of persons with disabilities, took measures towards analysis and harmonization of its national legislation with a view to ratifying the Convention;

(g) The Netherlands has decided on the ratification of the Convention, which is expected this year;

(h) Poland carried out a detailed review of national legislation to determine the changes necessary to comply with the Convention, as a first step towards its ratification.

2. Harmonization of domestic legislation and practice in compliance with the Convention

18. Several States parties reported progress in harmonization of domestic legislation in compliance with the Convention:

(a) Argentina held a National Conference on the New Legal Regime on the Legal Capacity of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities that aimed at generating a forum for debate and analysis on the implication of the paradigm shift as a result of the Convention. Furthermore, in accordance with article 13 of the Convention, certain jurisdictions in Argentina now allow blind persons to act as witnesses to marriages;

(b) Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the decision to form a Council for persons with disabilities in order to promote cooperation between the Government and its offices, and associations of persons with disabilities;

(c) The Philippines created the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Office in April 2010. National Government agencies took measures in support of the implementation of the Accessibility Law and other legislation to further promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities;

(d) Senegal adopted the Law of Social Orientation on the implementation of the Convention. In May 2011 a technical committee met with the Prime Minister to discuss issues related to the Law;

(e) Slovenia adopted the Act on Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in light of the Convention. This two-part Act both prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability and includes measures to equalize opportunities for persons with disabilities;

(f) Thailand has enacted new legislation on disability in the area of anti-discrimination, empowerment, quality of life and education, with a view to enhancing legal standards to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities;

(g) Turkmenistan introduced a Law on Education which guarantees the necessary conditions to provide educational and professional training for persons with disabilities. The Law on Culture now includes the needs of persons with disabilities in the planning and execution of cultural events.

3. National implementation and monitoring

19. Several States parties reported on progress in developing and/or strengthening national frameworks for promotion, protection and monitoring of the Convention:

(a) The Argentina Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security established a Technical Committee to oversee the monitoring of the implementation of articles 16, 27 and 28 of the Convention;

(b) Canada is currently preparing its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is due in April 2012;

(c) China submitted its first country report on implementation of the Convention. It also reported that a Mental Health Law and a number of legal decrees, including the Regulations on Rehabilitation and the Regulation on Barrier-free Construction, are also being formulated;

(d) Congo created a national committee for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the national plan for persons with disabilities. The Government, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), also organized a seminar on the Convention;

(e) Costa Rica designated the National Council on Rehabilitation and Special Education (CNREE) as the agency responsible for monitoring implementation of the Convention and preparing related reports;

(f) Italy established the National Observatory on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, tasked with implementation and monitoring activities related to the Convention;

(g) Jordan revised its previous social strategy for 2010-2015 to incorporate gender and disability issues;

(h) The Lithuania Council for the Affairs of the Disabled, within the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson are functioning as independent institutions to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention;

(i) Oman is drafting its national plan related to the care and the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, as well as their inclusion in the development process;

(j) Saudi Arabia, through the Prince Salman Centre for Disability Research, created an executive committee for research on disability as well as a committee to report on the implementation of the Convention;

(k) Spain designated the National Disabilities Council by royal decree as the authority responsible for implementing the Convention. The Council, in turn, created the first independent body, in line with article 33.3 of the Convention;

(l) The Syrian Arab Republic created a national committee to implement disability policies and strategies in light of the Convention;

(m) Sweden submitted its first report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2011;

(n) Thailand, through the National Committee for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, set up a subcommittee in each province of the country to implement policies and enhance the protection of persons with disabilities at the local level;

(o) Turkey held a meeting on the National Implementation and Monitoring of the Convention in European Countries, in Ankara in March 2011.

4. Other policy measures for implementation of the Convention

20. Several Governments also reported other measures taken to implement the Convention. The following countries reported on progress in the area of accessibility, community-based rehabilitation, sectoral issues and other policy initiatives:

(a) Argentina decided that all presidential broadcasts on the national television network must be interpreted in sign language simultaneously, in compliance with article 66 of the new Law on Audio-visual Communication Services. Further measures in Argentina include providing financial support to persons with disabilities for self-employment or microenterprises, and accessible digital broadcasting;

(b) Australia launched its first disability-specific development aid strategy, "Development for All: Towards a Disability-Inclusive Australian Aid Programme 2009-2014";

(c) China issued a National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2010, in which a short-term goal of human rights protection includes protection for persons with disabilities. Further measures include increasing the coverage of the social security system and improvements in the education provided for children with special needs;

(d) Congo will convene a seminar in 2011 on inclusive schools in that country. The Administrative Reform Committee, which addresses the issue of compensation for disability resulting from work-related accidents and diseases, was relaunched in February 2011;

(e) Costa Rica created the National Register on Disability Statistics (RED) in February 2011 to improve statistics on persons with disabilities. The 2011-2021 National Policy on Disability will be used as a strategy for public institutions in furthering the effective promotion of, respect for and guarantee of, the rights of persons with disabilities. The Government also included questions pertaining to types of disabilities in its recent national census;

(f) Jordan, in collaboration with Handicap International, organized a data-collection campaign to map the distribution in villages and cities of persons with disabilities;

(g) Oman is currently developing a database on persons with disabilities in response to a royal decree. The database will be used to further promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development;

(h) Turkmenistan, through the National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights, has opened an Information Centre for Human Rights to promote the advancement of human rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities;

(i) The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, through the José Gregorio Hernández Mission, has included mechanisms for providing care to persons with disabilities in its guidelines related to the member countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA).[2]

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[2] ALBA countries include Antigua and Barbuda, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

B. Regional integration organization

21. The European Commission adopted the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to address inequalities and social exclusion. The overall aim of the Strategy, entitled, "A renewed commitment to a barrier-free Europe", is to empower persons with disabilities through economic and social development. The strategy operates at the level of the European Union to identify actions that supplement national initiatives and determines the mechanisms needed to implement the Convention, including in European Union institutions.[3]

C. United Nations system

22. The United Nations system continues to work collaboratively within its system organizations, as well as with other stakeholders, to promote the ratification and implementation of the Convention at all levels. Furthermore, the organizational plans and strategies of several entities of the United Nations system have been amended to reflect their renewed commitment to the Convention.

23. Since the last report of the Secretary-General in 2009, the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[4] has held several meetings, some of them virtual. The Group has finalized and endorsed its strategy and plan of action to mainstream the Convention throughout the work of the United Nations system.

24. The United Nations Development Group/Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Task Team has developed a guidance note on disability for United Nations country teams and implementing partners, entitled "Including the rights of persons with disabilities in United Nations programming at the country level". The note was endorsed by the United Nations Development Group at its meeting in October 2010.[5] The note has been developed to facilitate the inclusion of disability issues in the common country assessments process, both through the design and implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and through individual agencies in their areas of work.

25. The United Nations system also continues the work of implementing the Convention through more recent activities related to accessibility in the areas of human resources, information and physical facilities, awareness-raising, capacity-building and technical cooperation.

1. Accessibility: human resources, information and physical facilities

26. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the World Bank, held an Expert Group Meeting, entitled "Innovative and cost-effective approaches for inclusive and accessible development", at World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., from 28 to 30 June 2010. The experts examined strategic frameworks and identified priorities for action to strengthen national capacities and institutions. Participants also worked on the identification of innovative and cost-

[3] See http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/news/17121.aspx.

[4] See http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=46&pid=323.

[5] See http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/iasg/undg_guidance_note.pdf.

effective approaches to accessibility as a means of promoting disability-inclusive development and furthering the implementation of the Convention.[6]

27. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) recently adopted a resolution on enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities at ESCAP. The resolution calls for the ESCAP secretariat to develop and implement further disability-inclusive measures in light of the Convention.

28. The United Nations Interdepartmental Task Force on Accessibility was established jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in October 2010, to develop United Nations Secretariat-wide policy guidelines for improving accessibility in order to accommodate the needs and facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities on United Nations premises. During its first phase, the Task Force will focus on accessibility policies, standards and guidelines for the provision of interpretation and documentation services, and information and communication technologies. In its second phase, the Task Force will focus on human resources and physical facilities.

(a) Human resources

29. Offices of the United Nations system continue to make the necessary changes to ensure that their human resources policies are non-discriminatory and more inclusive of persons with disabilities. The Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) at its eighteenth session in June 2009 endorsed the policy statement on persons with disabilities in the United Nations workplace. The Network noted that the policy statement represents a paradigm shift, from one that focuses on a person's disabilities to one that recognizes persons with disabilities for their skills and abilities. It was also agreed that each organization should develop its own policy and report on implementation at the July 2010 session of the Network.

30. The CEB secretariat compiled the responses from organizations on the implementation of the policy, which were presented at the twentieth session of the Human Resources Network (see CEB/2010/HLCM/HR/28/Rev.1). The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination High-Level Committee on Management approved the Network decision, fully supported the implementation of policies on persons with disabilities by all organizations and requested the Network to consider ways to measure results, inclusive of best practices from the private sector (see CEB/2010/5).

31. A number of United Nations system organizations reported to CEB that the policy was being implemented or incorporated into their overall human resources policy. Several other organizations are currently in the process of developing a policy, or have amended their staff rules and regulations to include reasonable measures to accommodate persons with disabilities in their workforce. Furthermore, several offices of the United Nations system have begun developing sensitization programmes for their staff on disability in the workplace.

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[6] See http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1516.

32. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Directive on prohibition of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, and the recently promulgated staff-selection policy, incorporate non-discrimination against persons with disabilities as an explicit selection principle. In January 2011 UNICEF conducted a training seminar for its staff on disability awareness and staff development at its headquarters.

33. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed an training tool to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities into its workforce. The training course is entitled "Persons with DisAbilities: Ability. CapAbility. EmployAbility".[7] UNDP has made the online training toolkit available to others, with a view to increasing disability awareness and promoting inclusive employment practices.

34. The International Labour Organization (ILO) policy on the employment of persons with disabilities, adopted in 2005, includes the provision of reasonable accommodation necessary to enable a person with a disability to enter into, and remain in, employment within ILO. To complement this policy, a financial reserve for reasonable accommodation was established for the biennium 2010-2011. Furthermore, ILO introduced a disability inclusion initiative to increase the ability and confidence of ILO staff to address disability issues in their work and in their workplace.

35. The World Health Organization (WHO) finalized its policy on the "Employment of persons with disabilities" and conducted a workshop, entitled "Disability Equality Training" for human resources staff and its Staff Association, to help build awareness of, and support for, the policy. WHO also reviewed procedures for achieving reasonable accommodation for new and existing staff with disabilities, targeted outreach activities to advertise employment and internship opportunities to persons with disabilities, and conducted briefings for staff in regional offices on achieving disability equality in recruitment.

(b) Information

36. Several organizations of the United Nations system have conducted audits of their information and communications technologies, and have made changes to ensure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities. Some offices have established accessibility guidelines and policies for print documents, and have adopted universal web accessibility standards to improve the accessibility of their information resources. Furthermore, offices have conducted disability sensitization-related training of their staff to reinforce the need for information products to be more accessible to persons with disabilities.

37. OHCHR makes all relevant documentation available in Braille and in all six official languages, and provides accessible equipment, facilities and services for meetings of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Office facilitates disability-awareness training for staff interacting with Committee members and institutes accessibility procedures at sessions of the Human Rights Council.

38. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has adopted international standards and guidelines for its accessible Information Society Portal for the ESCWA Region (ISPER) and the web component of the ESCWA Statistical

[7] See http://www.undp.org/disability-course-demo.

Information System (ESIS). ISPER has been developed within the framework of follow-up activities to the World Summit on the Information Society. The web component of ESIS facilitates the exchange of statistical data between ESCWA and its member countries.

39. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in close collaboration with the Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communications Technologies (G3ict), developed and launched in February 2010 an e-Accessibility Policy Toolkit to support States parties in the implementation of the accessibility provisions of the Convention. The online e-Accessibility Policy Toolkit for Persons with Disabilities and its companion handbook present international case studies documenting effective policymaking solutions.[8]

40. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in partnership with the Inclusive Design Research Centre and the local government in Ontario, Canada, has developed a range of consolidated and publicly reviewed guidelines on how to create accessible office documents using many of the more popular office programmes and suites. The guidelines take the form of step-by-step instruction manuals with ample illustrations and helpful hints. A workshop on creating accessible digital office documents was held in November 2010 as part of the initiative.[9]

41. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and ITU collaboratively organized an accessibility workshop at WIPO headquarters for staff of the United Nations system and other international organizations in February 2010. The event brought together over 180 persons from some 32 organizations to promote awareness on accessibility and encourage webmasters within the United Nations system and other international organizations to implement accessibility awareness in their daily work.[10]

42. In 2010 WIPO launched two initiatives, the trusted intermediary global accessible resources (TIGAR) project and the enabling technologies framework project to facilitate the access to publications by visually impaired persons. The pamphlet, "Accessible Publishing", provides publishers with guidelines and best practices for producing disability-accessible publications. During 2009 and 2010, WIPO also proposed an international instrument related to copyright exceptions in order to create an enabling legal environment for better access to copyrighted and protected material by visually impaired persons.

(c) Physical facilities

43. Several organizations of the United Nations system have taken steps at their headquarters and other facilities around the world to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities during meetings and events. Measures have often commenced with accessibility audits, with input from organizations of persons with disabilities. Actions taken include the provision of ramps in conference rooms, designated parking areas, signage and automatic doors, and the development of access guides and accessible meetings checklists.

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[8] See http://www.e-accessibilitytoolkit.org.

[9] See http://www.unesco.org/webworld/icts/disabilities.

[10] See http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/2010/wipo_itu_wai.

44. The current renovations of United Nations Headquarters are being conducted under the capital master plan, which also addresses physical accessibility of the renovated facilities. The alterations to improve physical accessibility were designed by professional design firms to include ways of making the galleries of the Chambers accessible, improving circulation for mobility-impaired staff and providing ramps (rather than lifts) to podiums. Major areas of improvement in accessibility include entrances, elevators, toilets, safety equipment, signage and other information, and communications technology enhancement.

45. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights made a public pledge to promote the principles and rights of the Convention within her Office in order to ensure a welcoming work environment for persons with disabilities. An Interdivisional Disability Task Force was established to schedule and cost the implementation of a plan of action.

46. UNDP has recently completed an accessibility study of all its offices in New York and has implemented the recommendations of the report. Offices that are moving locations are given a premises relocation checklist that indicates an acceptable minimum level of accessibility. UNDP is developing standard operating procedures for the emergency evacuation of persons with disabilities.

2. Awareness-raising

47. Within the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Division for Social Policy and Development is the focal point on disability. The focal point continues to serve as a clearinghouse for information and resources on the work of the United Nations in the field of disability. It organizes panel discussions, seminars and other events in conjunction with major intergovernmental processes and other public information activities. The Division hosts the accessible website Enable, which continues to provide information in all languages. The United Nations Enable Newsletter, issued several times a year with input from organizations in the United Nations system and civil society, highlights disability-related work and provides an update on the implementation of the Convention, as well as a calendar of events and other news from civil society organizations.

48. The Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development to monitor the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities promotes the ratification and implementation of the Convention under his recently expanded mandate to include raising awareness of the Convention. During the past year, the Special Rapporteur, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, co-sponsored two panel discussions on mainstreaming disability in development and promoting disability-inclusive development in the context of poverty eradication. In March 2011 he co-facilitated a seminar in Oslo on mainstreaming disability in development cooperation, to promote the implementation of the Convention, the Standard Rules and other international instruments through international cooperation.

49. In order to observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, on 3 December, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs organizes a number of events in collaboration with other partners at United Nations Headquarters. At a high-level event in 2009, the Secretary-General designated Mr. Stevie Wonder, an international celebrity and blind person, as a United Nations Messenger of Peace. The ceremony was followed by panel discussions on the theme "Making the

Millennium Development Goals disability-inclusive: empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities around the world".

50. The Disability Film Festival of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, established in 2009, is a regular activity to commemorate the Day at United Nations Headquarters. The festival features a selection of short films to raise awareness of disability issues.

51. The United Nations Information Centre in Moscow, in partnership with civil society organizations, held an event in Sochi, the Russian Federation, the future venue of the 2014 Olympic Games. A meeting on cyberspace for persons with disabilities, held in May 2011, highlighted the importance of the Convention and the work of the Group of Friends of the Convention in bringing together experts in usability and accessibility.

52. ESCAP launched the "Make the Right Real" campaign in October 2010, aimed at accelerating the ratification and implementation of the Convention in the region. Since its launch, there have been country-level campaigns in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Korea. The country-level campaigns have enhanced awareness of and initiated key steps for the ratification and implementation of the Convention.

53. UNICEF, in a collaborative effort, published a learning guide on the Convention, as a companion to its child-friendly publication, *It's About Ability*, which promotes Convention principles. The learning guide is available in all six United Nations languages. *It's About Ability* has been translated into such additional languages as Armenian, Bulgarian, Italian, Japanese and Montenegrin.

54. The *World Report on Disability*, jointly published by WHO and the World Bank, was launched on 9 June 2011 at United Nations Headquarters. The report summarizes both the current situation of persons with disabilities and the best available scientific evidence on disability, and offers directions for policy and practice which can help overcome exclusion. The report has been developed with the full participation of persons with disabilities and their organizations, and will help raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

3. Capacity-building and technical cooperation

55. The United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability, administered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, provides support to catalytic and innovative activities for the implementation of the Convention. In 2010 the Fund supported a global network of persons with disabilities in the development of strategies for implementation of the Convention and a capacity-building project in health and employment for women with disabilities in India.

56. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with OHCHR and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted an international capacity-development workshop in Port of Spain in November 2010. The workshop was aimed at strengthening regional inclusion mechanisms to ensure full involvement of persons with disabilities and their organizations in the decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation processes associated with the implementation of the Convention in the Caribbean.

57. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Bank, Leonard Cheshire Disability (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and the Global Partnership for Disability and Development co-sponsored a Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) meeting on inclusion of the disability perspective in the Millennium Development Goals and inclusive development at the Conference of High-level Authorities of MERCOSUR and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in March 2010. During the Conference, the Department also conducted a training programme for over 100 participants focused on achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through implementation of the Convention.

58. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supported the Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii, in the convening of the International Forum on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Utilizing the Convention to Mobilize for Action, and made a keynote presentation at its plenary session, entitled "Development for All: Inclusive Policies, Programmes and Participation in the Millennium Development Goals". The Forum was held in conjunction with the twenty-sixth annual Pacific Rim International Conference on Disabilities, held in Honolulu, United States of America, in April 2010.

59. OHCHR continued to support Government and civil society ratification and implementation of the Convention through some 25 human rights field presences. Activities included workshops, supporting implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations on ratification and awareness-raising, and assisting with law and policy reform.

60. The United Nations Mine Action Service promotes the relevance of the Convention in addressing the rights and needs of victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war, with Governments and at related international meetings. The Service provides technical assistance and support to several programmes in such countries affected by conflict as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan.

61. ESCWA implemented the project, "Knowledge networks through ICT (information and communications technology) access points for disadvantaged communities", together with other regional commissions of the United Nations. The project worked to empower poor and disadvantaged communities, and more particularly women, by transforming selected existing ICT access points into community hubs of global knowledge networks. Two centres were transformed into knowledge hubs in Salamieh and Barzeh, Syrian Arab Republic.

62. In December 2010 UNFPA, leading the Group on Disability of the United Nations country team, facilitated the Syrian forum "Disability: Reality and Ambition", aimed at enhancing networking and cooperation among stakeholders involved in the integration of persons with disabilities into society. UNFPA also supported training on information technology and modern technologies for Syrian youth with vision impairment with a view to enhancing their employment prospects, an initiative that received a national award in 2010.

63. UNICEF supported the Government of Azerbaijan in the preparation of an implementation plan and the report on the implementation of the Convention. In Viet Nam, UNICEF assisted the Government in developing the draft Law on Persons with Disabilities and undertook a legal analysis of domestic legislation on persons with disabilities in preparation for the ratification of the Convention.

D. Non-governmental organizations

64. The role of non-governmental organizations, especially those working with persons with disabilities, is crucial to the successful implementation of the Convention. There are a number of global disability organizations with national and regional chapters around the world. These networks monitor and report on the implementation of the Convention, and assist member organizations in advocating for the compliance of national laws and policies with the Convention.

65. Civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, participate regularly in intergovernmental meetings and expert bodies, such as meetings of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Conference of States Parties. A day prior to the opening of the third session of the Conference of States Parties, a civil society forum was organized by the International Disability Alliance (IDA), a network of global and regional organizations of persons with disabilities,[11] with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

66. In December 2010 IDA organized a multi-stakeholder seminar in Geneva to help identify the key challenges of the full and effective implementation of the Convention. The expert seminar brought together IDA members, international non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies and representatives of States parties in order to examine the challenges to reforming mainstream and disability-specific legislation in compliance with the Convention.

67. The International Disability and Development Consortium task team on disability and HIV organized a disability networking zone at the XVIII International AIDS Conference, held in Vienna in 2010. In the zone, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, researchers, donors and conference attendees shared experiences and raised awareness of the interrelationship between disability and HIV.[12]

68. The World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry conducted a World Conference and General Assembly of its membership in Kampala in 2009. The Assembly focused on the Convention and its implementation, and adopted the Kampala Declaration on the Convention, which emphasizes legal capacity and the right to make decisions and the right to self-representation.

69. Inclusion International, a global federation of family-based organizations, advocating for the human rights of persons with intellectual disabilities, released its global report on inclusive education, entitled *Better Education for All: When We're Included Too*, at a conference on inclusive education, held in Salamanca, Spain, in October 2009.[13] At the conclusion of the conference, Inclusion International, together with other stakeholders represented in Salamanca, launched a campaign entitled "Initiative 24" to promote the implementation of article 24 of the Convention.

70. Representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities from five countries in the African region,[14] as well as representatives of regional

[11] More information on IDA is available at http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org.

[12] See http://www.heard.org.za/african-leadership/disability.

[13] The 1994 UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education had been held in Salamanca. Available at http://www.inclusion-international.org/en/extras/4.html.

[14] Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. See http://www.yorku.ca/drpi/files/KigaliDeclaration2011.pdf.

organizations of persons with disabilities, national human rights institutions and research institutes, met in Kigali in early 2011 at a workshop to develop the capacity of civil society for monitoring the human rights of persons with disabilities. The workshop concluded with a declaration calling for holistic monitoring of the implementation of the Convention in all African countries.

E. Multi-stakeholder partnerships

71. Increasingly, diverse global networks, consisting of Governments, United Nations agencies, national and international development organizations, civil society and other relevant organizations, work alongside traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to promote the implementation of the Convention. These networks mainstream disability issues into economic and social development efforts, and strengthen international cooperation in the field of disability.

72. The Global Partnership for Disability and Development is a global initiative to accelerate the integration of disability considerations into mainstream social and economic development in the context of the Convention. The Partnership, in collaboration with the World Bank, organized the International Development Partners Forum on Disability and Development in Brussels in September 2010. The event brought together development partners, representatives and disability focal points from Government donor agencies, United Nations agencies, multilateral organizations and private foundations on inclusive development. A follow-up meeting was held in Oslo in March 2011.

73. In addition, the Global Partnership for Disability and Development organized a number of initiatives promoting new forms of collaboration between traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, to discuss emerging challenges. In response to the earthquake in Haiti, the Partnership initiated a working group to ensure that reconstruction efforts involved persons with disabilities during all stages and that all rebuilt and newly built infrastructure would be fully accessible to, and usable by, persons with disabilities.

74. The Global Contact Group on AIDS and Disability is an informal, multi-stakeholder partnership made up of United Nations agencies, civil society and other development partners that work to include a disability perspective in HIV/AIDS advocacy and programming efforts at the international level in order to further the implementation of the Convention. The Group recently promoted the inclusion of disability issues at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on AIDS held in June 2011.

75. Pacific Disability Forum, including Governments, development organizations, human rights institutions and civil society organizations in the region, organized the second Pacific Regional Conference on Disability, with the theme "Promoting actions on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Pacific Region", held in Auckland in April 2011.[15] The outcome document included a list of recommendations to all stakeholders on significant and tangible steps to implement the Convention and empower persons with disabilities and their organizations.

[15] See http://www.pacificdisability.org/newsReader.aspx?newsId=215.

Annex

List of signatures, ratifications or accessions to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto, as of 1 July 2011

A. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Albania	22 December 2009	
Algeria	30 March 2007	4 December 2009
Andorra	27 April 2007	
Antigua and Barbuda	30 March 2007	
Argentina	30 March 2007	2 September 2008
Armenia	30 March 2007	22 September 2010
Australia	30 March 2007	17 July 2008
Austria	30 March 2007	26 September 2008
Azerbaijan	9 January 2008	28 January 2009
Bahrain	25 June 2007	
Bangladesh	9 May 2007	30 November 2007
Barbados	19 July 2007	
Belgium	30 March 2007	2 July 2009
Belize	9 May 2011	2 June 2011
Benin	8 February 2008	
Bhutan	21 September 2010	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13 August 2007	16 November 2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	29 July 2009	12 March 2010
Brazil	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Brunei Darussalam	18 December 2007	
Bulgaria	27 September 2007	
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007	23 July 2009
Burundi	26 April 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Cambodia	1 October 2007	
Cameroon	1 October 2008	
Canada	30 March 2007	11 March 2010
Cape Verde	30 March 2007	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007	
Chile	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
China	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Colombia	30 March 2007	10 May 2011
Comoros	26 September 2007	
Congo	30 March 2007	
Cook Islands		8 May 2009[a]
Costa Rica	30 March 2007	1 October 2008
Côte d'Ivoire	7 June 2007	
Croatia	30 March 2007	15 August 2007
Cuba	26 April 2007	6 September 2007
Cyprus	30 March 2007	27 June 2011
Czech Republic	30 March 2007	28 September 2009
Denmark	30 March 2007	24 July 2009
Dominica	30 March 2007	
Dominican Republic	30 March 2007	18 August 2009
Ecuador	30 March 2007	3 April 2008
Egypt	4 April 2007	14 April 2008
El Salvador	30 March 2007	14 December 2007
Estonia	25 September 2007	
Ethiopia	30 March 2007	7 July 2010
European Union	30 March 2007	23 December 2010
Fiji	2 June 2010	
Finland	30 March 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
France	30 March 2007	18 February 2010
Gabon	30 March 2007	1 October 2007
Georgia	10 July 2009	
Germany	30 March 2007	24 February 2009
Ghana	30 March 2007	
Greece	30 March 2007	
Grenada	12 July 2010	
Guatemala	30 March 2007	7 April 2009
Guinea	16 May 2007	8 February 2008
Guyana	11 April 2007	
Haiti		23 July 2009[a]
Honduras	30 March 2007	14 April 2008
Hungary	30 March 2007	20 July 2007
Iceland	30 March 2007	
India	30 March 2007	1 October 2007
Indonesia	30 March 2007	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)		23 October 2009[a]
Ireland	30 March 2007	
Israel	30 March 2007	
Italy	30 March 2007	15 May 2009
Jamaica	30 March 2007	30 March 2007
Japan	28 September 2007	
Jordan	30 March 2007	31 March 2008
Kazakhstan	11 December 2008	
Kenya	30 March 2007	19 May 2008
Lao People's Democratic Republic	15 January 2008	25 September 2009
Latvia	18 July 2008	1 March 2010
Lebanon	14 June 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Lesotho		2 December 2008[a]
Liberia	30 March 2007	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1 May 2008	
Lithuania	30 March 2007	18 August 2010
Luxembourg	30 March 2007	
Madagascar	25 September 2007	
Malawi	27 September 2007	27 August 2009
Malaysia	8 April 2008	19 July 2010
Maldives	2 October 2007	5 April 2010
Mali	15 May 2007	7 April 2008
Malta	30 March 2007	
Mauritius	25 September 2007	8 January 2010
Mexico	30 March 2007	17 December 2007
Monaco	23 September 2009	
Mongolia		13 May 2009[a]
Montenegro	27 September 2007	2 November 2009
Morocco	30 March 2007	8 April 2009
Mozambique	30 March 2007	
Namibia	25 April 2007	4 December 2007
Nepal	3 January 2008	7 May 2010
Netherlands	30 March 2007	
New Zealand	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Nicaragua	30 March 2007	7 December 2007
Niger	30 March 2007	24 June 2008
Nigeria	30 March 2007	24 September 2010
Norway	30 March 2007	
Oman	17 March 2008	6 January 2009
Pakistan	25 September 2008	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Panama	30 March 2007	7 August 2007
Papua New Guinea	2 June 2011	
Paraguay	30 March 2007	3 September 2008
Peru	30 March 2007	30 January 2008
Philippines	25 September 2007	15 April 2008
Poland	30 March 2007	
Portugal	30 March 2007	23 September 2009
Qatar	9 July 2007	13 May 2008
Republic of Korea	30 March 2007	11 December 2008
Republic of Moldova	30 March 2007	21 September 2010
Romania	26 September 2007	31 January 2011
Russian Federation	24 September 2008	
Rwanda		15 December 2008[a]
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		29 October 2010[a]
San Marino	30 March 2007	22 February 2008
Saudi Arabia		24 June 2008[a]
Senegal	25 April 2007	7 September 2010
Serbia	17 December 2007	31 July 2009
Seychelles	30 March 2007	2 October 2009
Sierra Leone	30 March 2007	4 October 2010
Slovakia	26 September 2007	26 May 2010
Slovenia	30 March 2007	24 April 2008
Solomon Islands	23 September 2008	
South Africa	30 March 2007	30 November 2007
Spain	30 March 2007	3 December 2007
Sri Lanka	30 March 2007	
Sudan	30 March 2007	24 April 2009
Suriname	30 March 2007	

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Swaziland	25 September 2007	
Sweden	30 March 2007	15 December 2008
Syrian Arab Republic	30 March 2007	10 July 2009
Thailand	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	30 March 2007	
Togo	23 September 2008	1 March 2011
Tonga	15 November 2007	
Trinidad and Tobago	27 September 2007	
Tunisia	30 March 2007	2 April 2008
Turkey	30 March 2007	28 September 2009
Turkmenistan		4 September 2008[a]
Uganda	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Ukraine	24 September 2008	4 February 2010
United Arab Emirates	8 February 2008	19 March 2010
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	30 March 2007	8 June 2009
United Republic of Tanzania	30 March 2007	10 November 2009
United States of America	30 July 2009	
Uruguay	3 April 2007	11 February 2009
Uzbekistan	27 February 2009	
Vanuatu	17 May 2007	23 October 2008
Viet Nam	22 October 2007	
Yemen	30 March 2007	26 March 2009
Zambia	9 May 2008	1 February 2010

[a] Accession.

B. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Algeria	30 March 2007	
Andorra	27 April 2007	
Antigua and Barbuda	30 March 2007	
Argentina	30 March 2007	2 September 2008
Armenia	30 March 2007	
Australia		21 August 2009[a]
Austria	30 March 2007	26 September 2008
Azerbaijan	9 January 2008	28 January 2009
Bangladesh		12 May 2008[a]
Belgium	30 March 2007	2 July 2009
Benin	8 February 2008	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13 August 2007	16 November 2009
Bosnia and Herzegovina	29 July 2009	12 March 2010
Brazil	30 March 2007	1 August 2008
Bulgaria	18 December 2008	
Burkina Faso	23 May 2007	23 July 2009
Burundi	26 April 2007	
Cambodia	1 October 2007	
Cameroon	1 October 2008	
Central African Republic	9 May 2007	
Chile	30 March 2007	29 July 2008
Congo	30 March 2007	
Cook Islands		8 May 2009[a]
Costa Rica	30 March 2007	1 October 2008
Côte d'Ivoire	7 June 2007	
Croatia	30 March 2007	15 August 2007
Cyprus	30 March 2007	27 June 2011

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Czech Republic	30 March 2007	
Dominican Republic	30 March 2007	18 August 2009
Ecuador	30 March 2007	3 April 2008
El Salvador	30 March 2007	14 December 2007
Fiji	2 June 2010	
Finland	30 March 2007	
France	23 September 2008	18 February 2010
Gabon	25 September 2007	
Georgia	10 July 2009	
Germany	30 March 2007	24 February 2009
Ghana	30 March 2007	
Greece	27 September 2010	
Guatemala	30 March 2007	7 April 2009
Guinea	31 August 2007	8 February 2008
Haiti		23 July 2009[a]
Honduras	23 August 2007	16 August 2010
Hungary	30 March 2007	20 July 2007
Iceland	30 March 2007	
Italy	30 March 2007	15 May 2009
Jamaica	30 March 2007	
Jordan	30 March 2007	
Kazakhstan	11 December 2008	
Latvia	22 January 2010	31 August 2010
Lebanon	14 June 2007	
Liberia	30 March 2007	
Lithuania	30 March 2007	18 August 2010
Luxembourg	30 March 2007	
Madagascar	25 September 2007	
Mali	15 May 2007	7 April 2008

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Malta	30 March 2007	
Mauritius	25 September 2007	
Mexico	30 March 2007	17 December 2007
Mongolia		13 May 2009[a]
Montenegro	27 September 2007	2 November 2009
Morocco		8 April 2009[a]
Namibia	25 April 2007	4 December 2007
Nepal	3 January 2008	7 May 2010
Nicaragua	21 October 2008	2 February 2010
Niger	2 August 2007	24 June 2008
Nigeria	30 March 2007	24 September 2010
Panama	30 March 2007	7 August 2007
Paraguay	30 March 2007	3 September 2008
Peru	30 March 2007	30 January 2008
Portugal	30 March 2007	23 September 2009
Qatar	9 July 2007	
Romania	25 September 2008	
Rwanda		15 December 2008[a]
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		29 October 2010[a]
San Marino	30 March 2007	22 February 2008
Saudi Arabia		24 June 2008[a]
Senegal	25 April 2007	
Serbia	17 December 2007	31 July 2009
Seychelles	30 March 2007	
Sierra Leone	30 March 2007	
Slovakia	26 September 2007	26 May 2010
Slovenia	30 March 2007	24 April 2008
Solomon Islands	24 September 2009	
South Africa	30 March 2007	30 November 2007

Participant	*Signature*	*Ratification or accession*
Spain	30 March 2007	3 December 2007
Sudan		24 April 2009[a]
Swaziland	25 September 2007	
Sweden	30 March 2007	15 December 2008
Syrian Arab Republic		10 July 2009[a]
The former Yugoslav Republic of Mace 'onia	29 July 2009	
Togo	23 September 2008	1 March 2011
Tunisia	30 March 2007	2 April 2008
Turkey	28 September 2009	
Turkmenistan		10 November 2010[a]
Uganda	30 March 2007	25 September 2008
Ukraine	24 September 2008	4 February 2010
United Arab Emirates	12 February 2008	
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	26 February 2009	7 August 2009
United Republic of Tanzania	29 September 2008	10 November 2009
Yemen	11 April 2007	26 March 2009
Zambia	29 September 2008	

[a] Accession.